

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 52
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol 52,*
Number 1

Article 4

1973

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Recommended Citation

Matter, Robert Allen (1973) "Economic Basis of the Seventeenth-Century Florida Missions," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 52: No. 1, Article 4.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol52/iss1/4>

ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FLORIDA MISSIONS

by ROBERT ALLEN MATTER*

MANY AMERICANS ARE familiar with the chain of Franciscan missions in Spanish California. Less well-known is the significant Franciscan mission system that flourished among the Florida Indians more than a century before the friars founded their first Upper California mission at San Diego in 1769. The Franciscans began their program in Florida in the late sixteenth century, after the collapse in martyrdom of a relatively weak, five-year Jesuit effort. Within a hundred years the friars had forged their mission chains from the presidio at St. Augustine some 200 miles north along the Florida and Georgia coasts, to the vicinity of Port Royal Sound, South Carolina, and over 200 miles west to the Chattahoochee River, where the present states of Florida, Georgia, and Alabama meet. At the height of the Florida mission era in the mid-seventeenth century the Franciscans, with probable exaggeration, claimed from 26,000 to 30,000 Christian Indian converts in thirty-eight to forty-four principal missions served by possibly seventy friars. The English-Indian raids of the late seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century practically obliterated the mission system. A few Christian Indian remnants huddled under the guns of the Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine until 1763, when Spain ceded Florida to England.¹

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1. Robert Allen Matter, "The Spanish Missions of Florida: The Friars Versus the Governors in the 'Golden Age', 1606-1690" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1972), vii-viii, 58, 60-61, 88, 102-03, 106, 198-205, 288-313, 317, 339-40. Perspective of the Spanish reports can be gleaned from the probability that the total number of Indians in Spanish Florida (considered in this article as the current state of Florida, the Georgia coast, and southeastern South Carolina) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not exceed 15,000 to 30,000; Matter, "Spanish Missions," 15, 17, 320-21. See also John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States* (Washington, 1946), map 3, pp. 16, 84, 89, 101, 191-92; John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (Washington, 1952), 120-52; Petition of Fray Alonso de Jesus, February 27, 1635, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, *estante* 54, *cajón* 5, *legajo* 10, no. 40, photostat in Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library

The strategic threat to Spain's treasure fleets sailing along the Florida coast that was posed by a 1564 French toehold on the peninsula resulted in Pedro Menéndez de Avilés's conquest in 1565. The absence of precious metals and wealthy, docile Indians, plus overextended Spain's more acute problems elsewhere, relegated Florida to the role of a poor stepchild in the Spanish Empire.² Retention of the colony primarily was due to the Spanish mania for evangelizing the Indians. The king often asserted his "intent and only interest in Florida . . . was to further the work of holy conversion, . . . that the Indians willingly submit to the holy evangelical yoke without their being harrassed or molested,"³ or similar pious, self-righteous expressions.

Most of the published works on the Florida missions dwell on the founding, expansion, and fall of the Franciscan system, with emphasis on numbers of friars, Indian population, conversion

of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. Archivo General photostats and transcripts will hereinafter be cited AGI; Stetson Collection photostats will be noted as SC. The extent of the Franciscan system in 1655 is reported in Juan Díaz de la Calle, "Memoria de las Poblaciones Principales, Yglesias, y Dotrinas . . . de las Provincias de la Florida," *Noticias Sacras y Reales de los Ymperios de las Yndias occidentales* . . . (1657), transcribed from copy (or original) in Biblioteca Nacional, Vol. J94, September 15, 1857, by Thomas Buckingham Smith, microfilm copy, Buckingham Smith Papers, reel 1, P. K. Yonge Library. De la Calle's 1655 mission list also appears in Manuel Serrano y Sanz, ed., *Documentos históricos de la Florida y la Luisiana, siglos XVI al XVIII* (Madrid, 1912), 132-33.

2. Bartolomé Barrientos, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Founder of Florida*, Anthony Kerrigan, transl. (Gainesville, 1965), xviii, 21-22, 28, 31-71; Félix Zubillaga, *La Florida, la misión jesuítica (1566-1572) y la colonización española* (Roma, 1941), 143-53; Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands; A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven, 1921), 7-9, 11, 16-25, 133-50; Michael V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870* (Gainesville, 1965), 1-29, 37-42; Matter, "Spanish Missions," 2-4, 25-44, 63-64, 79-82, 141-42, 308ff.
3. Royal cédula to royal officials of Florida, December 5, 1651, AGI 54-5-10, 110, SC. See also Maynard Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest of Florida (1513-1618)* (Washington, 1937), 141-54, 163-67, 171-83, 208-12; Zelia Sweett and Mary Sheppy, *Spanish Missions of Florida* (St. Augustine, 1940), 33-37, 39; Luis Gerónimo de Oré, "The Martyrs of Florida (1513-1616)," Maynard Geiger, transl. and ed., *Franciscan Studies*, XVIII (July 1936), 104; Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 42-43. The growth of the Franciscan missions was the only significant development in Florida from the death of Menéndez in 1574 until the aggressive English challenge forced Spain to increase the colony's military posture by beginning construction of the Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine in 1672. See Verne E. Chatelain, *Defenses of Spanish Florida 1565 to 1763* (Washington, 1941), 53, 57-59; John Jay TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida 1700-1763* (Durham, 1964), 4-6; Kathryn Abbey Hanna, *Florida, Land of Change*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill, 1948), 49, 56.

problems, church-state bickering, Indian rebellions, and missionary martyrdom. Lacking are comprehensive accounts of the economic basis of the seventeenth-century missions, indeed, of seventeenth-century Florida itself. This gap in our knowledge of colonial Florida in part results from an apparent paucity of primary source material on the subject. Except for repeated reports of poverty from early Florida residents, data on the economy and means of sustenance in the colony are meager, confusing, incomplete, and inconclusive. Even substantial information on the supposed keystone of Florida's subsistence, the royal situado, or subsidy due annually from New Spain or Mexico, apparently is lacking.

During much of the first Spanish era, 1565-1763, Florida was little more than a presidio at St. Augustine, surrounded by the missions.⁴ Competing military and clergy jockeyed for manpower and influence. Soldiers concentrated in the presidio and Franciscan missionaries in the provinces comprised the bulk of the meager Spanish population.⁵ A few civilian officials, their families, and military dependents made up most of the remainder. In some instances, particularly that of the governorship, civil administrative posts were filled by military officers. Notably absent from early Florida were significant numbers of Spanish farmers and tradesmen. Since the operation of the missions and the presidio were somewhat mutually interdependent, and both were tied in with the productive capacity, or lack thereof, of the Indians, the overall colonial economy will be examined in an attempt to reveal a broader view of the economic basis of the missions than that shown thus far.

Many Spaniards in colonial Florida did not share the enthusiasm of modern Americans for the generally pleasant, mild climate of the region, nor did they recognize the rich fertility of the area. Lacking today's techniques of agriculture and engineering and modern means of transportation and communication,

4. Hanna, *Florida, Land of Change*, 49.

5. Seventeenth-century Spanish Florida's three major provinces were named for the principal Indian tribes inhabiting the respective regions: Timucua extended from the current northeastern Florida coast west to the Aucilla River. The area centered on present-day Tallahassee made up the province of Apalachee. The Georgia coast was called Guale. See Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 29, 51-55, map facing 64; Chatelain, *Defenses of Spanish Florida*, 122n, map 21.

they viewed the jungles, swamps, storms, and vast sandy stretches as relentless opponents to the leisurely, affluent life they desired to extract from the Indies. True, Spaniards overcame similar and worse obstacles while colonizing other areas in America. However, in those lands they found unprecedented deposits of silver and gold which gave them more incentive to remain and exploit their conquests. They also found in other regions sedentary Indians who could be utilized profitably after their subjugation. Not so in Florida. Especially in the early colonial period did the formidable aboriginal opposition hamper any Spanish inclinations to establish a sound economy. The European invaders' heavy reliance on the natives for subsistence and labor engendered and sustained Indian resentment which obstructed settlement and resulted in frequent hunger and poverty in the established colony.⁶

Menéndez had envisioned his colony becoming a flourishing land of rice, pearls, cattle, sugar, fruit, grain, wine, and silver—a wealthy adjunct to the king's domain, providing shipbuilding materials, dried fish and beef, hides, wool, and bacon for the Spanish home market.⁷ The expenditure of Menéndez's fortune on the enterprise and his death in 1574 eliminated that source

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6. Woodbury Lowery, *Spanish Settlements Within the Present Limits of the United States, Florida, 1562-1574*, 2 vols. (New York, 1901-1911, II, 242-44; Barrientos, *Menéndez*, 91, 106-08; Chatelain, *Defenses*, 42; John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors* (Washington, 1922), 58-59; John Tate Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia* (Chapel Hill, 1935), 60-64; Gregory Joseph Keegan y Leandro Tormo Sanz, *Experiencia misionera en la Florida (siglos XVI y XVII)* (Madrid, 1957), 265; Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest*, 104-05, 130-33; Sweett and Sheppy, *Missions of Florida*, 31-32; Governor Juan de Salinas to King, November 20, 1618, AGI 54-5-10, 7, SC; Francisco Ramírez to Crown, April 24, 1622, AGI 54-5-17, 88, SC; José de Prado to King, December 30, 1654, AGI 54-5-14, 115, SC; Governor Diego de Rebolledo to King, October 14, 1655, AGI 58-2-2, 2, SC; Franciscans of Florida to King, September 10, 1657, AGI 54-5-20, 72, E. W. Lawson, transl., from Woodbury Lowery Collection of Manuscripts (hereinafter cited WL), microfilm copy, reel 7, St. Augustine Historical Society Library. Lucy L. Wenhold, transl. and ed., *A 17th Century Letter of Gabriel Díaz Vara Calderón, Bishop of Cuba, Describing the Indians and Indian Missions of Florida*, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 95, no. 16 (Washington, 1936), 7, 13.
7. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to King, October 15, 1565, in Eugenio Ruidíaz y Caravia, *La Florida, su conquista y colonización por Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1893), II, 92-101; Barrientos, *Menéndez*, 138-42.

of support.⁸ To maintain this strategic outpost, Philip II decided to finance the colony with funds provided annually by the Viceroy of New Spain from the royal treasury in Mexico City. The amount of the king's annual subsidy in currency and goods to Florida varied with the size of the garrison, which generally was limited to an authorized strength of 300, including the missionaries. The subsidy slowly rose from Philip II's 33,000 pesos (24,-000 ducats) to approximately 100,000 pesos by 1700.⁹

The most consistent theme running through the many documents examined pertaining to the economy of seventeenth-century Florida is the failure of the annual situado to arrive on time and in adequate amounts, despite repeated directives from the Crown to the viceroy to support the northern frontier colony properly. Many such anguished complaints came from Florida's governors, royal treasury officials (frequently simply referred to as the royal officials), and friars. In 1696, for example, Governor Laureano de Torres y Ayala (1693-1699) confided to his guest, Jonathan Dickinson, the shipwrecked English Quaker, that the colony was in great distress because it had received no supply ships for more than two years. Everything had been expended except ammunition and salt. According to Dickinson, the governor explained that all supplies of bread, clothing, and money came from Havana and Portobelo.¹⁰ Florida experienced hard

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8. Barrientos, *Menéndez*, 138-40; Lowery, *Settlements*, II, 383-84; Bolton, *Borderlands*, 140-42; "Historia de la enfermedad de Pedro Menéndez, . . . 11 de Septiembre de 1574 por el Licenciado Olalde, Medico de la Armada," in Ruidiaz y Caravia, *La Florida*, II, 513-14.
 9. TePaske, *Governorship*, 6; Charles W. Arnade, "Cattle Raising in Spanish Florida 1513-1763," *Agricultural History*, XXXV (July 1961), 116-24, reprint, St. Augustine Historical Society Publication 21 (St. Augustine, 1965), 4; Governor Salinas to King, November 20, 1618, AGI 54-5-10, 7, SC. The Spanish population of Florida rose from about 300 at the beginning of the seventeenth century to about 1600 at the close. See TePaske, *Governorship*, 77-78, and Chatelain, *Defenses*, 133n. The actual strength of the garrison, including the Franciscans, probably never reached that authorized until after 1675; it rarely was much over 200. See also Matter, "Spanish Missions," table 3, 417-22.
 10. Jonathan Dickinson, Jonathan Dickinson's *Journal: or, God's Protecting Providence*, Evangeline Walker Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews, eds. (New Haven, 1961), v, viii, x-xi, 61. Governor Alonso de Aranguiz y Cotes reported the food situation so bad in 1662 that he and all his garrison had to look for roots to survive. Besides, the governor had not been paid; and he hoped the King would transfer him from Florida. Governor Aranguiz y Cotes to King, August 8, 1662, AGI 58-2-2, 8, SC. The following documents are among the many that also lamented the poverty

times when no complete subsidy arrived in more than ten years in the 1630s and 1640s.¹¹ In 1666 a debt of more than 450,000 pesos had accumulated in unpaid subsidies during a seven-year period.¹² At least one ship carrying the Florida situado perished in a storm. In addition to the loss of needed clothing, flour, and artillery, 8,368 pesos went to the bottom of the sea. The subsidy debt to Florida at that time amounted to 30,368 pesos. The governor declared the situation critical.¹³ An enterprising, lucky English “pirate” added to the woes of the hard-pressed Floridians when he hauled in a ship en route to St. Augustine with the colony’s situado on board.¹⁴

Officially, the subsidy covered the pay, subsistence, and clothing of the soldiers and friars, as well as the salary of the royal officials and the governors. Other important uses of the situado in Florida included gifts and, at times, some support for the Indians and munitions for the garrison. Hence, the drought of payments to the colony kept it in an almost perpetual state of hardship and was, therefore, a matter of continuous concern.¹⁵ Apparently the governors kept at least one of Florida’s officials in Mexico a good part of the time trying to pry loose the subsidy.¹⁶

and misery of the Florida colonists, including the missionaries, and their dependence upon the situado: Governor Damián de Vega Castro y Prado to King, August 22, 1639, AGI 54-5-10, 51, SC; Governor Benito Ruíz de Salazar Vallecilla to King, October 16, 1645, AGI 54-5-10, 56, SC; Memorial of Fray Alonso del Moral, September 18, 1676, AGI 54-5-20, 17, WL, Vol. VIII, Library of Congress.

11. Memorial of Fray Francisco Pérez, endorsed July 28, 1646, AGI 54-5-20, WL, reel 7, P. K. Yonge Library.
12. Governor Francisco de la Guerra y de la Vega to Queen, August 13, 1666, AGI 54-5-10, 103, SC.
13. Governor Luis de Rojas y Borja to King, February 15, 1627, AGI 54-5-10, 21, SC.
14. Governor and royal officials of Florida to King, May 27, 1649, AGI 54-5-10, 62, SC.
15. Governor de Vega Castro y Pardo to King, July 9, 1643, AGI 54-5-9, 105, SC; Memorial of Fray Francisco Pérez, endorsed July 28, 1646, AGI 54-5-20, WL, reel 7, P. K. Yonge Library; royal officials of Florida to King, March 18, 1647, AGI 54-5-14, 105, SC; Alonso Menéndez Posada to King, February 9, 1648, AGI 54-5-14, 108, SC; José de Prado to King, December 30, 1654, AGI 54-5-14, 115, SC; Governor Aranguiz y Cotes to King, August 8, 1662, AGI 58-2-2, 8, SC. As the missionaries were considered a means of defense, their expenses were charged to the Royal Ministry of Defense. See Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Wider Horizons of American History* (New York, 1939), 124-25.
16. Governor de Vega Castro to King, July 9, 1643, AGI 54-5-9, 105, SC. Acting Governor Nicolás Ponce de León, II to Queen, July 8, 1673, AGI 58-1-26, 24, SC; Viceregal decree to General Council, March 5, 1669, AGI

However, it appears that the *situado* early and frequently became a crutch for many Florida officials and even the Crown doing little or nothing to try to make the colony more self-sustaining. Although there were some attempts to establish meaningful agricultural and other economic enterprises in Spanish Florida, most of them rarely went beyond the discussion phase. It seems that no sustained effort was made to maintain or expand the few significant activities actually started. Obviously though, despite complaints by the governors and others indicating practically total dependence upon the elusive *situado*, such a situation could not have been the case. The Spaniards did maintain a military-religious garrison of from about 190 to slightly more than 300 in Florida throughout the seventeenth century. Its members and their dependents ate and were clothed and sheltered, though probably often poorly, during long periods of time without the benefit or support of the king's subsidy.¹⁷ Undoubtedly, however, the neglected Florida settlers would have liked more of the necessities and good things of life more frequently than they experienced them.

If the *situado* failed to sustain Spanish Florida, other sources had to provide a significant share of its support. Except for the Calusa and related tribes in the south, the Florida Indians, prior to the advent of the Spaniards, had developed an important partially self-sustaining, primitive slash/burn agriculture, with corn as the major crop.¹⁸ The European invaders, primarily through the missionaries, expanded and improved Indian farming by introducing new implements, domestic animals, and new crops such as wheat, oranges, cultivated grapes, and other fruits.¹⁹

58-2-2, 14, microfilmed translations of the Spanish records of the North Carolina Historical Commission, reel 24, North Carolina Historical Records Survey, Ruth Kuykendall, transl., St. Augustine Historical Society. Hereinafter microfilmed documents of the North Carolina Spanish Records will be cited NC. Kuykendall's translations in the St. Augustine Historical Society Library will be designated NC, reel 24.

17. TePaske, *Governorship*, 6-7; Matter, "Spanish Missions," 417-22.
18. Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables, 1971), 16-17; Swanton, *Southeastern*, 17-18, 243ff; Federal Writers Project, *Florida, A Guide to the Southernmost State* (New York, 1947), 39-41; Daniel G. Brinton, *Notes on the Floridian Peninsula, Its Literary History, Indian Tribes and Antiquities* (Philadelphia, 1859), 94, 105, 123-24; Lanning, *Missions of Georgia*, 19-21; John W. Griffin, ed., *The Florida Indian and His Neighbors* (Winter Park, 1949), 11, 55, 72, 140, 145; Dickinson, *Journal*, 99, 106-08.
19. Dickinson, *Journal*, 108; Keegan y Tormo Sanz, *Experiencia*, 365; Maynard Geiger, "Biographical Dictionary of the Franciscans in Spanish

Certainly the whites frequently relied on the Indian for subsistence from his crops and for labor to work their fields. Complaints about the poor soil, especially that around St. Augustine, did not dissuade the colonists from forcing the Indians to raise essential food crops near the town and elsewhere to grace Spanish tables.²⁰

In spite of a few attempts to develop a significant colonial industry, agriculture apparently never advanced beyond a partial local subsistence state in the seventeenth century. In 1675 the Bishop of Cuba, Gabriel Díaz Vara Calderón, during an official visitation of the Florida missions, described how mission Indians combined farming with the hunt:

During January they burn the grass and weeds from the fields preparatory to cultivation, surrounding them all at one time with fire so that the deer, wild ducks, and rabbits fleeing from it fall into their hands. . . . Then they enter the forests in pursuit of bears, bison, and lions.²¹

Calderón further explained how the Indians began to plant in April, the men opening trenches, and the women following, sowing. He reported all Indians in common cultivated the lands of the caciques, or chiefs.

The bishop's description of the mission Indians' appearance, clothing, dwellings, and weapons in 1675 generally fit that of the tribes at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards more than a century earlier. He further considered the natives to be "weak and phlegmatic as regards work, though clever and quick to learn any art they see done, and great carpenters as is evidenced in . . . their wooden churches." Porridge made "of corn with lye hominy," pumpkins, and beans reportedly comprised their ordi-

Florida and Cuba (1528-1841)," *Franciscan Studies*, XXI (1940), 1; Joyce Elizabeth Harman, *Trade and Privateering in Spanish Florida 1732-1763* (St. Augustine, 1969), 22-24; Lowery, *Settlements*, II, 375-79.

20. Francisco Ramírez to Crown, April 24, 1622, AGI 54-5-17, 88, SC; Memorial of Pray Francisco Pérez, endorsed July 28, 1646, AGI 54-5-20, WL, reel 7, P. K. Yonge Library; "Testimony of Governor Rebolledo's Visita to Timucua and Apalachee," January-September, 1657, AI Escribanía de Cámara, *legajo* 155, no. 18, SC; Governor Andrés Rodríguez de Villegas to King, December 27, 1630, AGI 54-5-10, 30, SC. Contending that the Florida Indians were well-off, Rodríguez pointed out the absence of *encomiendas* (patronage and control of Indians by individual Spaniards), mills, mines, and Indian tribute in the colony.

21. Wenhold, *17th Century Letter*, 13.

nary diet. Well-to-do Indians “could afford” game and fish. Their only barter was “the exchange of one commodity for another, which exchange they call *rescate*.” Knives, scissors, axes, hoes, hatchets, glass beads, blankets, rough cloth, garments, and other “trifles” made up the most common items of trade.²²

Two decades after Calderón’s visit, the shipwrecked Jonathan Dickinson, half-starved during much of his ordeal in Florida, understandably devoted a significant part of his tale of rescue and survival to food. Just before reaching the southernmost Spanish sentinel house en route to St. Augustine from near Jupiter Inlet in Southeast Florida, where his party washed ashore, they encountered the first planted crop they had seen in the colony—“pumpions” growing on an Indian “plantation.” However, their rescuers, a Spanish military escort, frequently hungry, beat the Englishmen to the fruit. Dickinson’s group dined primarily on boiled pumpkin leaves. In St. Augustine, then a town of over 300, bountiful orchards of oranges, lemons, limes, pome-citrus, figs, and peaches impressed the Englishmen. Passing through the coastal missions north of the capital on the way to the English settlement of Charles Town, South Carolina, Dickinson observed that there were many Indians in the mission towns and that they were industrious, kept neat “plantations,” and raised many hogs and fowls as well as corn and peas. In contrast, Dickinson implied that their neighboring Carolinian relatives had no agriculture, but subsisted on hunting and fishing and on trading deer-skins for their other needs.²³

As seen, by the end of the seventeenth century Menéndez’s vision of a prosperous Florida was far from realization. However, a few farsighted, enterprising men did, for one reason or another, make some commendable efforts to alleviate the poor economic conditions in the colony. Little has been written about these activities, primarily because little available information about them exists. Also, scholars seemingly have accepted too readily the colonial emphasis on the *situado* concept of support. Well-known or not, the local economy of seventeenth-century Florida must have sustained, however poorly, the Spanish *presido* and the missions during long periods of subsidy famine.

22. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

23. Dickinson, *Journal*, 36-41, 46-48, 54, 62-68, 76, 108.

Although Indian produce might have fed colonial Floridians, the settlers desired wheat and beef to supplement their slim diet. Information on wheat growing in Spanish Florida is meager indeed. Taking the initiative, Governor Benito Ruíz de Salazar Vallecilla (1645-1646, 1648, 1648-1651) founded several wheat haciendas, apparently in the provinces of Timucua and Apalachee, to help sustain the colony and perhaps to enhance his personal fortune. Ruíz's wheat farms ran afoul of Franciscan opposition decrying Spanish exploitation of Indian labor. The friars also charged that the governor operated the haciendas for his own benefit rather than for the good of the colony, as he claimed.²⁴ Bowing to missionary pressure, Sergeant Major Pedro Bénédict Horruytiner eliminated the haciendas during his second term as ad-interim governor (1651-1654), "for the good of Florida, the King, the Indians, and the conversions."²⁵ Hence, the enterprise never reached its apparent potential, but the hope embodied in its concept did not perish with the farms.

In 1677 Governor Pablo de Hita Salazar (1675-1680), pointing out to the King the great benefits that could be gained by settling families of Spanish farmers from the Canary Islands in Apalachee, declared that in a few years they could have rich farms of wheat as abundant as maize. He claimed such a development would eliminate the need for the Florida subsidy from Mexico. The rich harvest of wheat gleaned by the Franciscan friars in Apalachee's mission farms from the small amount sown supposedly attested to the fertility of the region's soil. According to de Hita Salazar, the farmers also could cultivate to Florida's advantage the indigo, cotton, and cochineal already growing in Apalachee.²⁶ De Mita Salazar's recommendation was only one of several such unrealized suggestions made periodically to improve

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24. Royal cédula to royal officials of Florida, December 5, 1651, AGI 54-5-14, 110, SC; Franciscans of Florida to King, September 10, 1657, AGI 54-5-20, 72, WL, Lawson, transl., reel 7, St. Augustine Historical Society; Governor Rebolledo to King, October 18, 1657, AGI 54-5-18, 52, SC.
25. Franciscans of Florida to King, September 10, 1657, AGI 54-5-20, 72, WL, Lawson, transl., reel 7, St. Augustine Historical Society. See also "Residencia taken by Governor Rebolledo of his predecessor, Governor Ruíz de Salazar Vallecilla, and other officials," 1656, AI Escribanía de Cámara, *legajo* 155, no. 11 (new *legajo* division 155B), SC.
26. Governor Pablo de Hita Salazar to King, September 6, 1677, AGI 54-5-11, 14, SC; *ibid.*, June 11, 1678, AGI 58-2-5, 5, SC.

Florida's agriculture.²⁷ As far back as 1573, for example, Philip II approved Menéndez de Avilés's plan to send fifty Asturian families to the colony, but no known record of such a boost to Florida's population and economy during the first Spanish period exists.²⁸

Though also meager, there is considerably more information available on a neophyte cattle industry than on wheat in the colony. Present-day Florida is a beef-producing state, and it seems that not all colonial Spaniards ignored the prospects of the grass-covered savannas of the region to provide fresh meat and help overcome the inadequacies of the king's subsidy. The earliest Spanish explorers and would-be conquerors, beginning with Ponce de León on his second voyage in 1521, took cattle to Florida in their unsuccessful attempts to colonize the land. Menéndez introduced cattle into his first permanent settlement founded in 1565. Unfortunately, the full story of that early abortive beef-raising venture largely remains a mystery.²⁹

Available documents reveal an interest in cattle raising in Florida throughout the seventeenth century. Governor Juan de Salinas (1618-1624) in 1618 and 1619 reported an attempt to establish a cattle industry to help sustain the presidio.³⁰ Some time during 1645-1646 Governor Ruíz sent a frigate to Havana for cows to breed on his haciendas in Apalachee to help alleviate the hunger of the Florida colonists.³¹ Acting Governor Nicolás Ponce de León I, who succeeded Ruíz upon the latter's death in 1651, purchased and maintained at government expense the several wheat and cattle haciendas Ruíz had founded. Ponce died soon after taking office, and as indicated earlier, the new interim governor, Pedro Horruytiner, dismantled the ranches. Horruytiner supposedly acted without consulting the Crown, which

27. Royal cedula to Governor Aranguiz y Cotes, May 6, 1663, AGI 58-1-34, 3, SC; Governor Manuel de Cendoya to Queen, November 6, 1671, AGI 58-1-26, 14, SC; Royal cedula to Governor de Hita Salazar, January 1675, AGI 58-1-21, 141, SC; Acting Governor Nicolás Ponce de León II to Crown, March 24, 1675, AGI 58-1-35, 18, SC; Lanning, *Missions of Georgia*, 219.

28. "Real licencia concedida a Pero Menéndez de Avilés . . .," March 3, 1573, in Ruidiaz y Caravia, *La Florida*, II, 373-74.

29. Arnade, "Cattle Raising," 4-5; Lowery, *Settlements*, II, 375-79.

30. Governor Salinas to King, November 20, 1618, AGI 54-5-10, 7, SC; *ibid.*, May 24, 1619, AGI 54-5-10, 9, SC.

31. Nicolas Ponce de Leon to King, August 20, 1646, AGI 54-5-14, 100, SC.

originally appeared to favor the hacienda project as a potential boon to Florida's economy.³²

Later, in a 1651 decree, the King backed the Franciscans in the controversy. Though His Majesty allowed that "the haciendas would be useful in the future for sustenance" of the colony, he declared that "up to now they have been a great burden on the Indians— an obstruction to the newly converted and a hindrance to the reduction of the infidels." He implied that the vexations caused by the ranches had provoked the Indians to revolt in 1647. In his decree, however, the King did not go so far as to direct Florida's officials to eliminate the haciendas. He merely expressed his desire that the Indians not be further abused and that the missionary work be supported and not be obstructed by the cupidity of the governors and soldiers.³³

Occasional references to a livestock industry in Florida also appear in subsequent seventeenth-century documents. In 1677 Governor de Hita Salazar repeated to the Crown a need for 100 infantry reinforcements to replace Indians employed in security tasks so the natives could return to agricultural and cattle-raising pursuits-activities necessary to sustain human life in Florida.³⁴ Marcos Delgado, ordered in 1686 by Governor Juan Márquez Cabrera (1680-1687) to reconnoiter the Upper Creek country west of Apalachee for signs of French encroachment, reported spending several days at his Apalachee cattle ranch preparing for the expedition.³⁵ In 1699 the Apalachee Indians still were complaining about alleged evils of Spanish ranches, including unredressed cattle damage to their fields and villages. Captain Francisco Florencia, deputy for the governor in that province, was a prin-

32. "Residencia taken by Governor Rebolledo of his predecessor, Governor Ruiz de Salazar Vallecilla, and other officials," 1656, AI Escribania de Cámara, *legajo* 155, no. 11 (new *legajo* division 155B), SC; Governor Rebolledo to King, October 18, 1657, AGI 54-5-18, 52, SC. In the case of the cattle ranches, the Franciscans also charged that the destruction of the Indians' crops by the governors' cattle also alienated the Indians, further hampering the evangelical effort.

33. Royal cédula to royal officials of Florida, December 5, 1651, AGI 54-5-14, 116, SC.

34. Governor de Hita Salazar to King, September 6, 1677, AGI 54-5-11, 34, SC.

35. Marcos Delgado to Governor Juan Márquez Cabrera, October 30, 1686, and extract, Antonio Matheos to Governor Cabrera [n.d.], in Mark F. Boyd, transl. and ed., "The Expedition of Marcos Delgado from Apalachee to the Upper Creek Country in 1686," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XVI (July 1937), 11-12, 21-28.

principal culprit. Founder and owner of a ranch of cattle, horses, and swine, he reportedly required Indians to do personal chores for him without pay.³⁶ The Apalachee did more than complain, for on November 5, 1700, Governor José de Zúñiga y Cerda (1699-1706) ordered his deputy in Apalachee, Captain Roque Pérez, to investigate and punish Indians who killed Spanish cattle. Zúñiga also directed Pérez to promote an increase in the procreation of calves and to utilize cattle in collecting the tithes.³⁷ Further, there are frequent references to Spanish Florida's cattle industry in surviving documents of the early eighteenth-century death throes of the colonial missions which indicate the origin and development of a promising stock-raising enterprise in the late seventeenth century.³⁸

Although the evidence is sketchy, and little is known about the actual results of the above laudatory attempts to help the colony support itself, presumably its prosperity and economic development never approached that achieved elsewhere in colonial Latin America, and strategic Florida remained a neglected backwater of the Spanish-American Empire. Apparently though, the cattle industry in the colony peaked in three areas. Two of the main cattle-producing regions were located in Timucua, along the St. Johns River, near the current town of Palatka, and in the Gainesville-Santa Fe area of modern Alachua County. The present-day Tallahassee-St. Marks area of what was the colonial province of Apalachee comprised the third principal district. Tax records for 1698 and 1699 reveal a possibility of some 2,300 head of cattle in Florida at that time. Depending upon the inclination and strength of the incumbent governor, the beef produced primarily enriched the cattlemen and enhanced their prestige or was used chiefly to support the needy colony. At times the ranch-

36. Don Patricio, Cacique of Ivitachuco, and Don Andrés, Cacique of San Luis, to King, February 12, 1699, and Don Patricio Hinachuba to Don Antonio Ponce de León, April 10, 1699, Mark F. Boyd, transl., in Mark F. Boyd, Hale G. Smith, and John W. Griffin, *Here They Once Stood: The Tragic End of the Apalachee Missions* (Gainesville, 1951), 24-27.

37. Order of Governor José de Zúñiga y Cerda, November 5, 1700, Boyd, transl., in Boyd, Smith, and Griffin, *Here They Once Stood*, 31.

38. See Boyd, transl. and ed., "Documents Describing the Tragic End of the Mission Era," in Boyd, Smith, and Griffin, *Here They Once Stood*, 45, 50, 54-55, 60-61, 91-95; Governor Zúñiga to King, January 6, 1703, in Mark F. Boyd, "The Siege of St. Augustine," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (April 1948), 346; Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier 1670-1732* (Ann Arbor, 1929), 81.

ers smuggled their product to Cuba. Early eighteenth-century English-Indian raids in Florida ended the cattle "boom" during the first Spanish colonial period.³⁹

Enterprising Spaniards conceived other projects to improve Florida's economy, none of which materialized. One royally-approved proposal called for sending twenty-four selected families from Campeche (Yucatán, New Spain) to Florida for one year to teach the Apalachee to weave cotton. It apparently never got beyond the correspondence stage. Supposedly, proper cultivation would have resulted in the production of sufficient cotton for a weaving industry in the province.⁴⁰

Like other Spaniards in seventeenth-century Florida, the Franciscans, and even their Indian converts to some extent, theoretically and officially relied on the king's subsidy for their support. Also like the others, the missionaries survived and functioned for long periods of time without the king's alms. Though they frequently referred to the poverty and laziness of the Indians, the friars, perhaps even more than their other countrymen, depended on the natives for bread and labor. Relatively isolated among the Indians in the Florida wilderness, poorly and erratically supported by their secular and clerical superiors, the missionaries who won the affection or respect of their native charges, and, of course, those who otherwise dominated the Indians, probably ate better than most of their secular brothers in the colony.

Both Fray Luís Gerónimo de Oré, a Franciscan visitor general who inspected the missions in 1614 and 1616, and Bishop Calderón in 1675, reported the Indian offerings of foodstuffs to their priests. Oré told of native converts taking generous quantities of pumpkins, beans, corn, and toasted flour as offerings to the dead at masses said for the departed.⁴¹ Calderón wrote: "Offering is made to the church of the best parts [of the fruits of the hunt], and this serves for the support of the missionary priest, to whom

39. Arnade, "Cattle Raising," 5-10.

40. Memorial of Captain Domingo Leturiondo, Solicitor General of Presidio of St. Augustine, March 3, 1673, AGI 58-2-5, 3, SC; Memorandum on Leturiondo's proposal, March 28, 1673, AGI 54-5-11, 8, SC; former governor de la Guerra to Francisco Fernández de Madrigal, April 11, 1673, AGI 58-2-5, 4, SC; Royal cedula to Governor of Florida, June 14, 1673, AGI 58-1-21, 95, SC; Governor de Hita Salazar to King, November 10, 1678, AGI 61-6-20, 3, SC.

41. Oré, "Martyrs," 105.

they are in such subjection." The bishop praised the Apalachian wheat crop as one of excellent quality and so abundant that each *fanega* (about 1½ bushels) of seed planted yielded seventy *fanegas* of grain. That bountiful crop apparently went to the friars and needy widows as alms. Each of the mission Indians also contributed a log of wood to their priest before masses. In addition, they attended Christmas Eve midnight services "with offerings of loaves, eggs, and other food," reported Calderón. According to the bishop, the inhabitants of St. Augustine regularly depended upon the produce of Apalachee for sustenance, as the decrepit town had no resources except the government allowance which it awaited each year from Mexico City to feed and clothe the infantry.⁴² Surely then, the Franciscan missionaries also depended upon Indian agriculture and hunting for support.

Other correspondence of the period also shows the reliance of the padres on the Indians for subsistence. Captain Francisco de Fuentes, Spanish commander in Guale, in 1681 complained that the friars made Indian squaws grind corn on a feast day and solicited more than their share of maize from the natives, including payments for performing priestly functions at Indian burials and weddings.⁴³ Fray Domingo de Ojeda, a 1687 mission inspector from Spain, reportedly learned that Indian boys and girls were whipped if they failed to take something to mass for their priest and that some friars kept Indian servants.⁴⁴ The Franciscans, objecting to Governor Cabrera's ban against them collecting Indian produce to support the Church and themselves, felt that the Indians generally contributed to the Church voluntarily and with pleasure, under the paternal direction of the missionaries. These "gifts to God," according to the friars, were part of the natives' Christian obligation and helped to make the "naturally-lazy, inferior" aborigines better and more energetic men and women, in keeping with the Franciscans' sole objective of converting and uplifting the Indians. Besides, the king did not

42. Wenhold, *17th Century Letter*, 7, 13-14.

43. Captain Francisco de Fuentes to Governor of Florida, February 7, 1681, AGI 54-5-11, WL, reel 9, P. K. Yonge Library.

44. Governor Cabrera to Crown, February 28, 1687, AGI 54-5-13, 2, SC, translated summary, "Religious Index of Persons, Places, and Things," Catholic Historical Survey of Florida, St. Augustine Foundation, 1963-1965, P. K. Yonge Library.

provide sufficient alms to sustain the friars in the wilds of Florida.⁴⁵

Obviously, the flaws in the mission supply system hampered the Franciscan effort severely. For example, the Florida Indians did not furnish the monks adequate clothing for normal wear and provided none for their ceremonial priestly functions. For ornaments, wine, wax, oil, and bells to conduct mass and other religious observances the friars almost totally depended upon sporadic help from outside the colony. Some Spaniards considered St. Augustine the poorest parish in all the Indies. There was a paucity of private income for tithes, and there were few landholders to ask for assistance. Lamenting Franciscan poverty, the veteran Florida missionary, Fray Francisco de Pareja, revealed to Father Oré in 1614 how the friars had to sacrifice some of their own food and drink from their meager rations, or "from the alms the king commands be given us," to provide altars, vestments, and ornaments.⁴⁶

As the *situado* failed to meet Franciscan requirements, the correspondence of seventeenth-century Florida abounds with missionary pleas for wax, wine, and oil to practice the "divine cult." Such requests reached the highest levels of the Spanish bureaucracy, including the king. The friars might have asked His Majesty to extend his expiring grant of wine and oil for four or five years, for instance, and, after a diligent check of the records and views of the governors and royal officials by the Council of the Indies (charged by the king to administer and recommend policies for Spanish America), the king might have granted an extension of three years. One enterprising, efficient Franciscan provincial, or superior, suggested extending these grants for "long periods," apparently to eliminate frequent future petty correspondence on such a routine but essential matter. The Council of the Indies responded by recommending to the King an exten-

45. "Testimony and complaints by the Franciscan provincial and definitors to Governor of Florida," May-July, 1681, AGI 54-5-11, WL, Vol. IX, Library of Congress.

46. Sworn statement of Fray Francisco de Pareja, in Oré, "Martyrs," 107. See also Petition of Fray Simon de Ayllón to Crown, January 15, 1621, AGI 54-5-20, 23, SC; Council of the Indies to King, May 19, 1638, AGI 53-1-6, 48, SC. Council of the Indies to King, October 26, 1641, AGI 53-1-6, 51, SC, and draft royal cedula to royal officials of Florida, November 20, 1641, AGI 54-5-20, 38, SC, give interesting accounts of claimed royal support of Florida's Franciscans.

sion for four years. Another request for an unlimited-time extension of a royal grant of ten *arrobas* (approximately 250 pounds) of wax per friar per year was approved for eight years only.⁴⁷

Concern for Indians carrying missionary supplies to the monks without pay reveals that the elusive, eagerly-awaited *situado* occasionally did bring some relief to Florida's Franciscans. To get the loads off the Indians' backs, the King in 1648 ordered the governor of Havana to send 200 beasts of burden to Florida to carry supplies to the missions. The project was to be financed from the episcopal vacancy of Cuba; its costs were to be considered as alms for the divine work of saving the Indians. Apparently nothing was done, for six years later José de Prado, treasurer at St. Augustine, again reported natives serving as porters and suggested fifty pack animals be maintained in the colony to replace Indian bearers. In 1656 the Crown authorized Florida's civil and religious officials to buy as many pack animals as needed, using funds from the *situado*.⁴⁸ Thirty-four years later, in 1688, Indians again, or still, were carrying Franciscan subsidies from St. Augustine to Apalachee without pay.⁴⁹

Florida officials at times tried or considered different methods of supplying the western missions. At least on occasion the "conversions" of Apalachee and Apalachicola, the adjacent province to the west, were supported by ship from Havana.⁵⁰ A proposal by Fray Juan Moreno to send the *situado* to Apalachee overland from Mexico to avoid sea pirates and storms apparently came to

47. Council of the Indies to King, November 11, 1641, AGI 53-1-6, 52, SC; *ibid.*, August 30, 1646, AGI 53-1-6, 53, SC; Royal *cedula* to royal officials of Florida, March 7, 1668, AGI 58-1-21, 38, SC; *ibid.*, April 18, 1673, AGI 58-1-21, 90, SC.

48. Council of the Indies to King, November 21, 1651, AGI 53-1-6, 61, SC; Royal *cedula* to royal officials of Florida, December 5, 1651, AGI 54-5-14, 110, SC; José de Prado to King, December 30, 1654, AGI 54-5-14, 115, SC; "Testimony of Governor Rebolledo's Visita to Timucua and Apalachee," January-September 1657, AI Escribania de Cámara, *legajo* 155, no. 18, SC; Father Juan Gómez to Father Francisco Martínez, March 13, 1657, AGI 54-5-10, 73, SC. Indian bearers also hauled official and personal supplies and equipment for the governors and soldiers, of course, as indicated in these cited documents and many others.

49. Visitador Father Juan Machado to King, August 8, 1688, AGI 54-5-12, 69, SC.

50. Governor Luis de Horruytiner to King, June 24, 1637, AGI 54-5-10, 44, SC; *ibid.*, September 12, 1638, AGI 54-5-10, 50, SC; Governor Francisco Riano to King, Havana, August 20, 1638, AGI 54-1-17, 2, SC; Governor de Vega Castro to King, July 9, 1643, AGI 54-5-9, 105, SC; Governor Cendoya to Queen, October 31, 1671, AGI 58-1-26, 13 A-B, SC; Governor Diego de Quiroga y Losada to King, April 16, 1692, AGI 54-5-13, 33, SC.

naught due to the greater cost of a land haul of some 300 leagues (approximately 800 miles) and the need to use Indian porters to carry the goods.⁵¹

Other factors hampered efforts to support the missions. For instance, not all governors saw to it that the friars and the Indians received their fair share of the Crown's subsidy. Nor, apparently, did all viceroys of New Spain always include the religious portion in the subsidies they sent to Florida. Discussing provisions from the *situado* with Visitor Oré in 1614, Father Pareja complained: "It often appears that the government officials throw it to the dogs. It seems to them that soldiers are the necessary ones here and we are of no use, but we are the ones who bear the burden and heat and who are subduing and conquering the land."⁵² Furthermore, the long haul to the western missions, from seventy to 100 leagues over troublesome terrain and poor roads or trails, made the supply of those installations difficult and slow.⁵³

Evidence of just what amount of the *situado* belonged to the Franciscans is scant and confusing, due partly to the frequent separate requests and grants to replenish their supplies of oil, wax, wine, clothing, and even soap to wash their clothes, and, presumably, themselves. Other specific expenditures for transporting the padres from their convents in Spain to Florida, including subsistence en route, apparently generally were not charged to the colony's subsidy. Rather, the Crown usually ordered the *Casa de Contratación*, or Board of Trade, and treasury officials at ports of call along the way to cover them.⁵⁴ We do know the King claimed that during a period exceeding eighty years, ending at the close of 1651, to augment the faith in the

51. Francisco de Orejón to Francisco Fernández Madrigal (for Queen), January 3, 1673, AGI 58-1-35, 12, SC.

52. Statement of Father Pareja in Oré, "Martyrs," 107. See also Governor de Vega Castro y Pardo to King, August 22, 1639, AGI 54-5-10, 51, SC; Franciscans of Florida to King, September 10, 1657, AGI 54-5-20, 72, WL, Lawson, transl., reel 7, St. Augustine Historical Society; Fray Diego de Corpa to King, July 24, 1660, AGI 54-5-20, 82, SC, Petition of Fray Juan Moreno, April 22, 1673, AGI 54-5-20, 96, SC.

53. Governor Horruytiner to King, November 15, 1633, AGI 54-5-10, 35, SC; *ibid.*, June 24, 1637, AGI 54-5-10, 44, SC royal cedula to royal officials of Florida, December 5, 1651, AGI 54-5-14, 110, SC.

54. Fray Alonso de Jesus to King, March 27, 1631, AGI 53-2-12, SC; royal cedula, April 18, 1635, AGI 2-2-245/2, 14, SC; petition of Fray Diego de Corpa, July 7, 1667, AGI 54-5-20, 85, SC; royal cedula, February 20, 1668, AGI 2-2-245/2, 32, SC.

colony the Crown spent more than 70,000 pesos in maintaining the presidio and soldiers, "plus other great sums from the treasury to employ religious in Florida."⁵⁵ In the light of subsequent data, this vague statement appears to be a very low estimate of incurred, but not necessarily paid, religious expenses in the colony, especially if the cost of maintaining the military garrison was considered a religious expense.

Governor Pedro de Ibarra stated in 1615 that each friar annually cost the Crown 1,535 reales.⁵⁶ In 1633 Governor Luis de Horruytiner (1633-1638) reported that he accounted for the Franciscans as soldier spaces in his *dotación*, or authorized colonial strength, and paid each of them accordingly, 115 ducats per year.⁵⁷ The Viceroy of New Spain decreed a payment of 12,451 pesos to Florida's subsidy agent in Mexico in 1669 for the support of thirty-seven Franciscan friars then in Florida. The payment was part of a total 83,435 pesos covering one year's portion of those subsidies in arrears. The total debt to Florida was approximately 400,000 pesos. Included in the total payment were 4,484 pesos for Indian caciques going to St. Augustine on royal order.⁵⁸

A suggestion of relative Franciscan prosperity, at least late in the seventeenth century, can be found in the complaint of Governor Diego de Quiroga y Losada (1687-1693) to the King about the friars refusing to sell needed corn to the infantry garrison in

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55. Royal cedula to royal officials of Florida, December 5, 1651, AGI 54-5-14, 110, SC. This perhaps rhetorical inclusion of military expenses in the evangelical budget seems to be a contradiction of, or exception to Bolton's premise in *Wider Horizons*, 124-25, that missionary expenditures were charged to defense costs.
56. Franciscans of Florida to King, January 17, 1617, AGI 54-5-20, WL, reel 6, P. K. Yonge Library; Sweett and Sheppy, *Missions of Florida*, 38, equate 1535 reales to about \$192 (1940).
57. Governor Horruytiner to King, November 15, 1633, AGI 54-5-10, 35, SC. In *Missions of Florida*, 22, Sweett and Sheppy state that in the early Franciscan period each friar's *sueldo*, or pay, amounted to three reales, or thirty-eight cents a day, plus clothing, including four pairs of footwear per year. Maynard Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest*, 5-6n, 133, similarly equates a *real* to about 12½ cents and states that the friars were allowed twenty-four reales per year for clothing and sandals, in addition to their soldier's pay of three reales a day, which they drew in provisions. The Crown confirmed 115 ducats per year per friar in 1641; Petition of Fray Juan Moreno to Queen, April 22, 1673, AGI 54-5-20, 99, SC. In 1680 each Franciscan's pay, equal to that of a soldier, was 115 silver ducats per year for subsistence and clothing; see Governor de Hita Salazar to King, March 6, 1680, AGI 54-5-11, WL, Vol. IX, Library of Congress.
58. Royal officials of Florida to Crown, June 30, 1668, AGI 54-5-14, 134, NC, reel 24; Viceregal decree to General Council, March 15, 1669, AGI 58-2-2, 14, NC, reel 24.

Apalachee. The governor pointed out some of the advantages the padres reputedly had over other Spaniards in Florida: The Indians tilled one field of wheat for the fathers and another for the support of the Church, all at no cost to the friars, in violation of a previous order by Governor Cabrera, despite the king "providing all necessities" for the missionaries and their work. Besides, a good share of the tobacco, swine, fowls, and vegetables raised by the Indians, and corn and beans from the religious' fields, were sold in the St. Augustine market for the benefit of the Franciscans. Friars also traded these products of unpaid Indian labor on ships that called at the port in Apalachee. The padres claimed they needed the profits of such trade to buy church ornaments because they had not received the royal payments due them. The governor thought religious ornaments should be provided through the *situado* or by gifts.⁵⁹

This glimpse into the economic basis of seventeenth-century Florida and its Franciscan missions indicates that although official Spain inadequately provided for the colony, things not always were as bad as painted by the settlers. Despite continuous pleas for royal support for the seemingly distraught, poverty-stricken colony, pleas that frequently went unheeded, the Spaniards there did survive, though undoubtedly not in the style and comfort desired. Documentary references to wheat and cattle in Spanish Florida, and to Spanish use of Indian crops and labor, indicate the nature of much of the actual source of Spanish subsistence. The frequent laments of the Franciscans notwithstanding, the evidence suggests that the missionaries, living among and dominating, or greatly influencing their Christian converts, perhaps generally ate better than most other Spaniards in Florida. Depending largely upon the mission Indians and their own resourcefulness, and spurred on by their faith, the friars did survive and function on the primitive frontier. In fact, their zeal and dedication appeared to vary inversely to the degree of temporal prosperity and creature comfort attained.⁶⁰

59. Governor Quiroga y Losada to King, April 16, 1692, AGI 54-5-13, 33, SC.
60. In 1690 Governor Quiroga y Losada claimed that the missions had not increased in the last fifty years and that the friars suffered a loss of zeal after their arrival in Florida, possibly because they were too well-off in their established missions. Governor Quiroga to Crown, August 31, 1690, AGI 54-5-13, 13-13², NC, reel 8, P. K. Yonge Library.

At least in part due to the Franciscan effort, the mission Indians contrasted favorably with those outside the fold in western standards of agriculture and subsistence. However, the Spanish dependence on the Indians exposed their own economic neglect and fostered church-state dissension over control and treatment of the aborigines.

The long intervals between the arrivals of the subsidy, the official, theoretical source of Florida's support, and the insufficient quantity in which it came, demonstrate the inadequacy of the *situado* as an effective means of sustaining the colony. It appears that the subsidy became a crutch for the Crown, the Franciscans, and some governors to evade the necessity of founding Spanish settlements and initiating economic enterprises which could have enhanced Florida's self-sufficiency. At times colonial officials seemed to prefer "crying" for the promised *situado* rather than initiating local measures to alleviate their distress.

Though the evidence is not conclusive, sporadic ideas and efforts to achieve a significant measure of a self-supporting economy in seventeenth-century Florida generally failed to gain encouragement and support from the Crown and thus foundered. The Franciscans effectively opposed some attempts on the grounds that they alienated the Indians and hampered the evangelical crusade. A possible exception to this trend was the emergence of a promising cattle industry late in the century. However, subsequent English predominance in the region extinguished further prospects of the Spanish colony realizing its economic potential. Available evidence indicates that Christian Indians, augmented by the royal *situado*, economically sustained seventeenth-century Spanish Florida and its Franciscan missions.